PLAIN TRUTH
OR, A
SEASONABLE DISCOURSE
Of the DUTIES of
PEOPLE To their PASTORS

In an Eſſay upon *Heb:* 13: 17 *Obey them that have the Rule over you,* &c.

The firſt Book of Diſcipline, Head. 4. p. 30.
The People would be exhorted to Reverence and Honour their Miniſters, choſen as the Servants and Ambaſſadours of the *LORD JESUS*, Obeying the Commandement which they pronounce from *GODS* Mouth and Book, even as they would Obey *GOD* Himſelf.

Pooles *Annotations on* 1 Kings 6: 7.
It is the Duty of the Builders and Members of the Church, as farr as in them lyes, to take care, that all things be tranſacted there, with perfect Peace and Quietneſs; and that no noiſe of contention, or diviſion, or violence be heard in that Sacred Building.

Jo: Davenantius Sarisbur Epiſc: *de pace* Eccleſ: *p:* 89: 90
Omnes neceſſe habent confiteri, veram & genuinam Charitatem eſſe omnibus Eccleſiis & Chriſtianarum Eccleſiarum Membris non minus ad ſalutem neceſſariam, quam fidei Orthodoxæ & ſalutiferæ veram & Integram Profeſſionem.

By a Well Wiſher of all good Chriſtians.

EDINBURGH,
Printed by *J: Reid*, in the Year, 1693. To be Sold by *James Wardlaw*, at his Shop, oppoſite to the midle of the *Lucken-Booths.*

A SIGH AND A VOTE.

OH! were my Head as full of Tears
As is my Heart of Fears,
With watred Cheeks I would Lament,
Because the Church is Rent!
All say, we should in Love Unite,
As is both Juſt and Meet;
Yet none will quite a hair or * hoove,
For the Churches behoof:
GOD knows this ſhows not Wit nor Grace,
Baſe Self takes too much place:
LORD ſend me Joy inſtead of Tears,
And Hope in ſtead of Fears.
The Churches Peace LORD let me ſee,
Matched with Veritie;
And let me ſee Uniting Love
Working like Thine above,
That Saints each others faults may hide,
For all are apt to ſlide;
LORD make Thy Grace 'bove ſelf aſcend,
So be it, to the end.

* I mean no of Truth.

7 DEC 1965
D
LIBRA

Some Necessary ADVERTISEMENTS to the *READER*.

CHRISTIAN Reader,

I *Have been in manie Debates and perplexities of mind anent the publication of the ensuing Discourse, having suffered a smart conflict, through the interchangeable blows of these contending Parties in my bosome, viz Scripture, Reason, Conscience, Self, Hope and Fear; But while I was languishing under the wounds of this warfare, I received some recruite of Spirits and strength from the same Divine Oracle, that the worthie and pious Mr.* Burroughs *tells us, did quiet his mind in a like case; I will give you in his own words, "He that meddles "with the division of the times, may expect to be divided himself, to have "his name, his repute to be cut assunder, and thrown this way and that way. —— But seeing Providence hath brought it so fullie into my way, I shall nore venture upon it, with my heart eit and fixed upon that promise,* Prov. 11. 3. The uprightness of the upright shall guide him Irenic: c: 3: 11.

I was also induced to offer this Essay from the consideration of the seasonablenes and usefulnes of this subject, and several other motives, all which I will not here mention, but seeing a better hand has penned some of them, I will give them in his words, Mr. James Fergusson Expos: on 1 Thes: 5: 12: *p:* 234. *So great an enemy is Satan to the Ordinance of a publick Ministry, so necessary is it that People do countenance that Ordinance, and encourage those who are intrusted with it; so ignorant, unmindfull, and neglective are they of those duties which they ought to perform, that the Servants of CHRIST should with much seriousnes and affectionate Insinuation press upon the LORDS People, all such duties of Respect, Reverence, Love, Obedience, Submission,* Heb: 13. 17. *And gratitude,* Gal: 6. 6: *as they owe unto their Ministers. So far should they be from a total neglect of pressing any such duties under a pretence of self-denyal, or from prepostrous modestie. Thus far that wise and pious man. I am not without some dampish apprehension (I wish they be not Ominous) that I may be evil spoken of and misconstrued for my pains in what I offer in the ensuing Lucubration (for there is a prodigious Plague-Spirit of detraction and evil speaking raging at this time, as also of too credulous entertaining Jealousies and Reproaches) but I hope the sincerity of my Intention, and the kindnes of the great Patron of Truth will support me, being resolved to expose my self to a fair Venture, seeing I am persuaded it is Truth and seasonable Truth that I have delivered; but though I may sus-*

tains

taine the dammage of evill speaking, yet if I understood that but any one got soli dgood, I would rejoice more in that, then I will be sorrie for what rash Censures, some Scores may pass upon me; for very commonly the less Judicious and intelligent are most ready to carpe and censure. Hos: 4. 4. 6. Prov: 26: 12: 16. *Which therefore should not be thoughtfully heeded.*

But if any good Souls (whom the LORD knows I intend not to offend or griive, shal either inadvertently mistake, or uncharitably misjudge me (as I hope GOD will not) by imposing Sinister Senses on any thing I say, I pray GOD may forgive them (as I do) and that the Judge of all Flesh may be more mercifull to them then they are Just to me.

And more specially I caution here, (that seeing the Tendency of some Passages in the following Essay, is for recomending Union and Charitie) I may not be mistaken, for I am far from Heterogeneous mixtures, or such pieces of Alloy, as may corrupt or damnifie Religion; for its my hearts wish there may be a holy Ministrie, and a holy People; And O that there were a Gospel Spirit poured forth kinaly disposing all parties & People to lay by prejudices & Animosities, & seriously consider what may most probably contribute for the credit & safety of the Protestant Christian Religion, and for my own part I have smal hopes of the farther propagation thereof, or that its primitive puritie & lustre will be recovered, till all parties see the Ingredient hand they have had in obstructing & destroying the Comon Interests thereof, and thereupon repent and turn unto GOD whom we have provocked to divide us in his anger: And if we take Godly and Christian Methods for this effect, there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing, for our GOD who is the same Yesterday and to Day and for ever, has cured as desperate Maladies as ours are.

I thought fit to tell thee, that I have industriously and of design cited some passages from the Writing's of Masters James Durham, G: Gillespie: Samuel Rutherfoord, Jer: Burroughs, Richard Baxter, Richard Vines, Wil: Green-hill, and Rich: Alleine, *all of them unquestionably pious and able Ministers of the Gospell, to homologate what I say; that if thou will quarrel and censure, all the burden may not ly upon my weak shoulders alone, but I may have stronger then my self to help me with a lift.*

In the last place, I desire thou mayest not satisfie thy self with an overly glance of one passage or two, (which may occasion thy mistaking) but read over the intire discourse, and seriously ponder the Scripture grounds of it, seeking GODS blessing on what thou reads. I add no more but wishes that all professing Christians may be endued with a Spirit of a sound minu, and of true Charity and Holiness. FAREWELL.

A Discourse of the Duties of PEOPLE *to their* PASTORS.
In an Essay upon HEBREWS 13. 17.

Obey them that have the Rule over You, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for You.

THe Scope of this Text is to point at the mutual Duties of Pastors and People; Wherein we have

I. *The Pastors Dutie implyed.*

First, To Rule, or Guide. Secondly, To Watch.

II. *The Peoples Dutie expressed.*

First, To Obey. Secondly, To Submit.

III. *Reasons of Peoples Dutie to their Pastors.*

1. *R.* Because of the Obligation that lyes upon them, arising from the Relation they stand in to their Pastors. Pastors are Rulers; People are the Ruled. Pastors are Shepherds; People the Flock to be watched over.

2. *R.* Because of the weighty charge and care of Peoples Souls, that lyes upon Pastors, they watch over, and must give account of their Souls; and Pastors being so concerned in Peoples Good: It's most just they should be concerned in Pastors Good and Comfort, and they cannot better manifest this, then in performing expected Duties.

3. *R.* That People may be an occasion of Joy and Encouragement to their Pastors, and not creat or augment their grievances, which can nowayes be profitable to them.

I shall not spend time in Criticizing or Glossing upon the terms of our Text, but humbly offers what follows, as the plaine and genuine Sense thereof, according to our uptaking, as if we did hear the Apostle saying,

O! ye *Hebrews* understand your Station, know your Duty, GOD hath set Rulers over you, whom he hath vested with Authority, and Cloathed with a Commission to Guide and Govern you: And it is not your secular Interest they are to consult, but it is your Precious Immortal Souls they are watchfully concerned in. Therefore yield due Obedience and Submission to their just Commands & Counsels, not that I mean ye should do so implicitely for I have told you before, (*verse* 7.) and now again I put you in remembrance, that ye ought to obey them, while

 they

they ſpeake to you the Word of GOD, or agreeable thereunto; And it is very fit ye ſhould do ſo, that they may Rejoyce on your behalf, and not be diſcouraged in the Work of the LORD; wherein ſurely ye can reap no Profit.

Doctr: *There are ſeveral mutual Duties, that Paſtors and People are obliged to perform to one another.*

In proſecution of this head of Doctrine, *I* ſhal not meddle with the Duties of Paſtors, knowing that ſuch do underſtand their Station, and the Offices of it better than I can tell them; but will with GODS Aſſiſtance, chiefly touch what concerns the Duties of People to their Paſtors.

In diſcharge of which Undertaking, I will

1. *Lay down ſome general Propoſitions, that I expect all intelligent Chriſtians will receive, as unqueſtionable Truths.*
2. *I will inform People of ſome of their Duties to their Paſtors.*
3. *I will reach a Reproof to ſome who may juſtly deſerve it.*
4. *I will cloſe with a few Cautions.*

1. *As to the Propoſitions, they are Theſe.*

1. *Prop:* GOD out of his Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, has appointed a Goſpel Miniſtrie and Ordinances, to be continued in His Church to the end of the World, for making Diſciples, for the perfecting of the Saints, for edifying of the Body of CHRIST, and for ruling and taking care of the Church, *Matth:* 28. 19, 20. *Eph:* 4. 11, 12.

2. *Prop:* It is not the pregnant Parts, the excelling Gifts, nor the flouriſhing Graces of any Miniſters that conferrs a Vertue to GODS Ordinances to make them effectual, it's only the inward Workings and Power of the Spirit of GOD, accompanying outward Adminiſtrations, in fulfilment of GODS Gracious Promiſe, *Iſa:* 55. 11. 1 *Cor:* 3. 5, 6, 7. Who then is *Paul? &c.*

3. *Prop:* It is preſumable and to be rationally ſuppoſed, that knowing Godly and Judicious Miniſters underſtand the Contraverſies and Concerns of Religion better then the People, ſpecially thoſe who are illiterate, and not capable to uſe theſe Helps and Means of Underſtanding, which painful Miniſters are dayly improving, *Mal:* 2. 7. *The Prieſts lips ſhould keep knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the Law at his mouth.* Matth: 13. 52. 1 Tim: 4. 13, 15, 16. 2 Tim. 2. 15. Pray let me not be miſtaken here, as if I did hence infer, that learned Men *hoc ipſo*, or on the account

that they are learned, and have gifts or parts paramount to what the Vulgar can claime, therefore are to be esteemed the best men, or the most *Orthodox*, and faithful to the Interests of Religion; for the contrare has been to palpable in all the ages of the Church, that many has abused their Literature and Wits, to the dammage and prejudice of Religion: And it has been also known, that some common People, who could not set off their plain meanings in the learned terms of Art, yet have expressed their Conceptions as to the main things of Religion, with more savor and spiritual Sagacity, then many learned Clerks; but my meaning here is, that *ceteris paribus*, or being evens otherwise, that is, where Ministers are Pious and Conscientious, as well as Intelligent and Judicious, surely with this odds of Advantage, (it may be safely said) that they understand the Concerns of Religion, better than the unlearned People.

4. *Prop*: All Pastors and People are not of alike reach and attainments, in light, strength, Solidity of Judgement, and other Christian Perfections, there are strong Men, and there are Babes in Christ, there are Tollerably well Learned, and there are who are ever Learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; there is no doubt but various tempers, and capacities, various Gifts and Graces, various Interests and Projects, and Innumerable other various Circumstances, may Occasion several Persons thus stated to vary and differ in their Conceptions and Sentiments about somethings in *Religion*, (where yet on all sides there may be honesty in the main) the which differences in Judgement, should not make *alienation of affection*, nor Interrupt *Christian communion* where there is agreement & Unanimity in the Grand Articles of Faith. *Rom*: 14. 2. 5. 19. 1 *Cor*: 8. 1. 27. 13. 12. 13. *Phil*: 3. 15. Hence sayes Mr. *Gillespie Miscel*: *qu*: *p*: 142. I dare not appropriat the Name of the Godly party to these who are free from any of the errors of the times, those that are truely Godly may in diverse things differ in their Opinion, every error is not Inconsistent with Holiness. And Mr. *Durham* in his Book of Scandal *p*: 284. Speaking of differences among good People, sayeth he, There is no question many might go to Heaven, with such differences on both sides, for we will find them continue zealous in such (Differences) even to Death; neither ought this to be thought strange, for the best but know in part, and are subject to mistakes, &c. And Mr. *Rutherfoord* is also particular to the same purpose, *Dispute against Libertie of Conscien*

Epist: to the Reader, sayes he, We cannot think but all Saints in this side of Glory carry to Heaven with them errors mistakes, and Prophesying in part, and the Fairest Stars and lights in this Lower Firmament of the Church are Clouded, *&c.* One Suitable passage more I think worth Inserting here, which I find in a Printed Letter of the Presbyterian Ministers in *London*, presented to the *Westminster* Assembly, *January* 1. 1645. By reason of different Lights and differing sights among Brethren, there may be dissenting in opinions, yet why should there be any separating from Church Communion? The Churches Coat may be of diverse Colours, yet why should there be any Rent in it?

5. *Prop.* Neither Pastors nor People are able so singly, so Prudently, nor so diligently as they ought to Discharge all their respective duties: Who is sufficient for those things; 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. *Rom.* 7. 18, 19. So that neither should Pastors nor People rashly and uncharitably suspect, Challenge or censure one another, for if both will Impartialy and seriously search themselves, it will soon be found that on all hands, there is too much guilt of negligence and being defective in doing duties. Let us often remember our LORDS saying: *Mat.* 7. 5.

6. *Prop:* The disrespect and misbehaviours of People towards GODS Ministers, whom he hath sent & Sealed, their *Master* and Patron will resent as done against himself, for they are his Embassadours, his Messengers, cloathed with his authority, so that GOD Himself is touched and dishonoured with the affronts done to his *Servants*; *Luk.* 10. 16. *He that despiseth you despiseth me*, &c. I say not this as if I imagined, the quality & Character of a Minister should shelter or excuse him if he malverse or misbehave either against the Holy Laws of GOD, or just Laws of Men, for of all men on GODS Earth, a scandalous and prophane Minister is the basest and most Contemptible, hateful to GOD and all good men; but my meaning is that when any Persons do contemptuously abuse, injure or discourage the Ministers of CHRIST, for their works sake, or when in the due discret management of it: Surely GOD will notice and punish such. 2 *Chron.* 36. 15, 16, 17.

7. *Prop:* It is an unspeakably great blessing (to be prized above all other mercies) to enjoy the opportunity of Gospel ordinances in plenty and purity; Compare your condition with theirs who never heard of a Saviour, never heard a Gosple Preaching, never

ſaw the Bible, but worſhip Sun, Moon, and Stars, yea Divels for their Deities: And compare alſo with thoſe places of *Machumitan* darkneſs, that were ſometimes light in the LORD, and had the Candle of the Goſpel ſhining brightly among them. *Pſal:* 147 19. 20 *Luk* 1. 68. 78 79. O I ſay be humble and thankful ye that have the Goſpel in peace and plenty; for as Mr. *Burrough* ſayes, heretofore ye would have been glad of that which now you ſlight and reject, this is not from more light and ſtrength, that ye have now which ye had not then, but from more vanity, pride, and wantonneſs; *Irenicum.* p: 182.

8. *Prop:* Both Miniſters and People muſt anſwer to GOD, how they have minded and managed their reſpective duties. *Matt:* 7. 22. *Luk.* 13.23 2 *Tim* 4 14. *Heb.* 13. 17.

The ſecond point is to Informe you of the Duties of People to their Paſtors.

1. They ſhould conſult him in all their ſcruples doubts, and hard dark Caſes, ſo that when they are truely troubled and unclear about their Soul and Conſcience concerns, They ſhould betake themſelves to their Miniſter, with an earneſt deſire to be taught, and a ſingle reſolution humbly to comply with his Godly Counſels and directions, but ſee they be weighty Caſes, and alſo that that they be your own and ſuch as may tend to edifying, rather then to nouriſh curioſity; *Mal:* 2. 7. *Phil* 1. 7. 1 *Sam:* 9. 9. *Before time in Iſrael, when a man came to inquire of GOD, thus he ſpake, come and let us go to the Seer, for he that is now called a Prophet, was beforetime called a Seer.* And Miniſters may be called Seers, in regard they may ſee and have further inſight into caſes of Conſcience, then ſome others, eſpecialy they whom GOD hath trained up in variety of exerciſe themſelves.

2. People ſhould honour and reverence their Miniſters; Paſtors are ſpiritual Parents, and Eccleſiaſtick Rulers, and ye know that honour is due to ſuperiors; I ſay ye ſhould put all due notes of reſpect upon your Paſtor, not only on the account of his eminency of Gifts and Graces (which in their own Room deſerve eſteem) but for the dignity of his Calling, & the preferment that the GOD of Heaven has put upon him, he is called GODS Embaſſador, a Steward of the myſteries of the Kingdom, the meſſenger of the LORD of Hoſts, an Angel of the Churches, and ſurely to diſpiſe or diſparage ſuch is a manifeſt Contempt, both of the Divine precept and pattern. 2 *Cor:* 5 20 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Mal.* 2. 7. *Rev:* 1. 20. 1 *Thes* 5. 12, 13.

3. People ſhould love their Paſtors, and on all occaſions give ſuitable expreſſions of the true and tender affection they owe un to them: If affection cool, edifications gone, and all likelihood of profiting under that Miniſters labours, let him preach never ſo Powerfully or pertinently, I ſay if once love to his perſon be withdrawn, none of his performances will reliſh or affect; pray conſider the Tye betwixt Miniſter and People, it hath in ſeveral reſpects a near reſemblance to a marriage union and oblidgement, and as they in ſo cloſs a relation ſhould love one another, ſo proportionably ſhould the other diſcharge the alike duty, ariſing from an Eccleſiaſtick marriage and union, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12. 13.

4. People ſhould obey their Paſtors and receive their charges and commands with a due Deference and Obſervance, not as being the Word of a Man, but as it is in truth the Word of GOD. 1 *Theſſ.* 2: 13. Our Text tells us Miniſters are Rulers, and alſo they who are ruled ſhould obey; Miniſters ſhould not be looked on as Men only Veſted with human Qualities, being lyable to Errours, Miſtakes, Infirmities and Eruptions of their peeviſh Paſſions, even as others (the covering of Love and Charity ſhould be caſt over theſe) But what of GOD they repreſent, both on the account of their Commiſſion, and their faithfull diſcharge of the ſame, conform to their ſacred Inſtructions, that I ſay is mainly to be reſpected in them, and ſo they being the ſpeaking Trumpets of the GOD of Heaven, what of the Voice and Will of GOD they are Inſtruments to expreſs, ſhould for GOD'S ſake, their Maſters ſake, be readily received and obſequiouſly obſerved.

5. People ſhould humbly ſubmit to their Miniſters in the Diſpenſation and ſeaſonable application of all the Ordinances of the Lord: I mean not they ſhould implicity ſubject their Judgement to all their Dictats and Sentiments without Examination, for we know none that poſſeſs an infallible Chair, and certainly all the People of the LORD have a Judgement of Diſcretion allowed them, which they ſhould excerciſe in trying the Spirits whether they be of GOD, yet People are not hereupon licentiouſly and vainly to carp at every thing Miniſters ſay, but except there be very great and clear Reaſons in the contrar, they ſhould give a due deference to their Miniſters Opinion and Judgement in what he teaches or ſays; and as they ſhould ſubmit to him in the doctrinall part of his Miniſtry, ſo alſo in the

disciplinary part, meekly taking with just and reasonable admonitions or Rebukes, whether more publick or privat; Considering that he is vested with authority and charge upon his peril to rebuke as well as exhort; 1 *Tim.* 5. 20, 21. 2 *iTm.* 4: 2, 3.

6. People should vindicat their Ministers from injurious calumnies, and unjust Reproaches; the Pastors credit should be the Peoples care; and his integrity and innocency, their glory and joy: not only should ye be concerned this way because he is your Minister, or of your acquaintance, *&c.* but for the Gospels take; for there is no greater or more effectual Ingine of Satan (the accuser of the Brethren) for obstructing the progress of the Gospel, then to bring the Ministers thereof into discredit, and whoever are Satans Tooles in promoving this his plot, GOD knows it had better for them, that the first day they were heard speak, the buriall bell had been heard tolling for them; therefore it is the Concern of all good Christians to ward of what Tongue-Lashes may be reached against the Reputation of Ministers. *Acts* 23. 5. 1 *Tim.* 5. 19: *Jam:* 4. 11.

7. People should cheerfully render to Ministers all their just Rights and dues provided for their honest & comfortable maintainance, and be every way steedable to them for their help and encouragement: Though as we said, they are the *Angels of the Churches*, yet we would have you consider it is of the Church *Militant* in this World, and they cannot live like the triumphant Angles of Glory without meat and drink, no more then civil Rulers, though they be called *gods*; And seeing they are sequestrate from Worldly *Imployments*, whereby they might advance their *Secular Interests* and Wealth, as well as other men, and are set apart to attend and serve at the Altar, it is most just they should live of the things of the Altar; But we will not insist further on this point, lest it be thought we are pointing at our own Profits, but as we should give unto *Cæsar*, that which is *Cæsars*, so should we give unto GOD that which is GODS, of which dues Ministers dues are a part, as is clear, *Num:* 18. 20. 21. 24. 1 *Cor:* 9: 13: 14: *Gal:* 6: 6.

8. People should help Ministers with their prayers; for the LORDS *Sake* remember your Pastors before the LORD: Pray that GOD will give them the *Spirit* of their Calling, pray that he'le bestow on them gifts and graces, pray that he'le give them strength and courage, pray that he'le give them spi-

ritual Wisdom, and godly Zeal, for they have varieties of humors, and difficult cases to meddle with, pray that he'le bless and prosper their labours, even pray that GOD will be with them in their Closets, in their Pulpits, in their Converses, and in all their Performances: O Sirs! I say pray, pray for poor Ministers, there is none has more need of help then they, none has more need of a lift, for heavy, heavy is the Charge that lyes upon them, so that if the everlasting Armes be not underneath them (which ye are to implore) they will sink down under the Pressure of it, pray, pray for Ministers, for they have Needs, Wants, Weaknesses, Passions, and a carnal deceitful heart to wrestle with like other men, pray for them for their Stock is not in their own hand, seek then to him who hath the seven spirits of GOD, that he will dispense to them, what may be needful to be dispensed to you, and if there were no more but your own Interest, methinks this should have some weight with you, for the more he receives from the LORD the more of the LORDS hath he to give unto you, therefore I say pray, pray for Ministers, 2 *Thes:* 3. 2. *Heb:* 13. 18.

The third Point, is to reach a Reproof to some who are Blame worthy.

1. They are reproveable who incroach upon, or evacuate the Right and Authority of Ministers, which the Mediator has dotted and endued them with, and which of his own good pleasure he so shared among them, that by his Authentick Grant and Commission, they stand in a Just parity of power and Jurisdiction, so that the incroachments of civil Magistrats by an Erastian Supremacy come into be taxed here. As also, the Hierarchical Prelacy, whereby Bishops pretend a claim of superiority of order and Jurisdiction above the Ministers of CHRIST, from which GOD be thanked we are now freed; There comes also to be challenged here a kind of popular supremacy, that some unskilful and undutiful People have a humour to aspire after, taking too much upon them, in meddling with matters too high for them, we will not point at specialities, but I wish that People did understand their own Station, of being the Ruled and Watched over, and that they may keep within their own sphere of Activity, least they give the Arke of GOD a wrong touch.

2. They are reprovable who take up groundless petts and prejudices at Ministers; the truth is, the weakness and mistakes of many well meaning People is to be pitied and lamented: But alace, when such persons arrive at offensive practices, that have a-

manifeſt tendency to deſtroy all order and peace in the Church, it becomes mighty ſtraitning what courſe to take with them, ſo as neither to ſuffer them to run to greater Errors, or not to provoke them to deſpiſe all Ordinances; And conſequently the Authority of the Miniſtry; for if once cloudy prejudices overcaſt their minds, 'tis neither the Reaſon or Rhetorick of the beſt of Divines will diſpel their darkned thoughts, for that which is to be taxed in them (among other things) as their ſin (in being picked or prejudged) is their plagne too, that will not let them ſee their ſin, or underſtand their errors, GOD pitty and help them whoſe ſad caſe this is, *Gal:* 4. 16.

3. They are reproveable who miſconſtrue Miniſters, either in their Sermons or Practices, and this ordinarly follows upon the former, for where once prejudice takes place, the perverſe influence and tincture of this black humour too commonly prevails to make them affix the blackeſt ſenſe and gloſs upon the Miniſters ſayings and doings, if not ſometimes the quite contrat to what he ever either meaned or minded. *Henſe ſayes* Mr. Borrough, *we are bound to give the beſt Interpretation upon our Brethers Actions we can, if they be not apparently ill, we muſt rather wrong our ſelves by thinking too well of them, then wrong them by thinking too ill of them.* Irenicum p: 96. And ſayes Mr. *Durham, we come now to conſider what occaſional means may have influence upon this diviſion among Godly men, and ſuch may be,* Firſt ſome tale-bearers, and ſecreet whiſperers, who may have much influence to alienate good mens affections, by miſrepreſenting the words and actions of others, *&c.* Of ſcandale p: 277. I glanced before in the fourth *Propoſition*, that neither Miniſters nor People, are all of alike ſtandard and ſtature in their light and judgement, ſome have a freedom to ſay and to do that which others mightily ſcruple, ſome are ready to judge that duty, which others reckon to be ſin, as one ſaith,

All minds are not alike, nor of one frame,
What ſome approve, others condemn the ſame.

But ſo long as the ground of different Opinions is things indifferent, or that leſs concerns the eſſentials of Religion, I beſeech you for GODS ſake, do not misjudge or miſconſtrue one another, but forbear one another in Love, endeavonring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, *Eph:* 4: 23: To which purpoſe ſaith Mr. *Allan, Hold communion in the things wherein you agree, and charity wherein you differ:* Vind: piet: 2: piet: p: 142. *ſee alſo* Green-hil *on* Ezek. 11. 19 p: 411.

4. They are reproveable who cast at Ministers on slender and frivolous accounts; O 'tis great and weighty Reasons, that should make people withdraw from the Ministry of their Pastors, to whom they have given their hand, and should give their Heart, the mischief of such rash adventurs is not conceiveable; O that GOD would discover the greatness of this too common and grievous, yet slighted sin. But ah! when people faird this sin with the fancy of duty, it's hard, hard, and only for GODS Handling to cure such a distemper; however, if it may haply prove an ingredient in the cure (through GODS Blessing) to tell you what are insufficient grounds of withdrawing from a Gospel Ministry, behold in the following Considerations, I'le in part inform you.

1. Ministers should not be cast at for their Faithfulness and Freedom in the seasonable Reprehension, of the Vices, Errors, and Faults, either of great or small, Godly or wicked, or of any sort of People or party, Ministers should neither cowardly neglect to tell the greatest persons their abominations, nor partially decline to tell the greatest Professours, their extreems and extravagancies (providing all be done with prudence and to edification) I doubt not but there is a culpable failzure among Ministers, in not declaring the whole Council of GOD upon the one hand, as well as upon the other: An Ambassadour of Christ should speak boldly as he ought to speake, *Isa.* 58: 1. 2: *Eph:* 6. 20. Hence says Mr. *Baxter*, *A sinful humouring of rash Professours, is as great a temptation to Godly Ministers, as a sinful complyance with the great ones of the World.* Cure of Church, *Divis:* p: 394:

2. Ministers should not be cast at for the weakness of their gifts, for as we have demonstrated before 2. *Prop:* The desirable success of Ordinances depends not on the Qualification of the Administrators, but on the Blessing of that GOD, who by all His own Means, accomplishes all His own Ends, and sometimes by the weakest and least promising Instruments *GOD* Atchieves the greatest Gospel fates, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of *GOD* and not of Men, and I will not say but upon the contrar to, the ablest of Ministers may be cast at by some, for the Vulgar are not very discreet, or competent Judges of, Ministers, abilities, being many times pickers and choisers of Ministers, more one the account of homologating their Sentiments in some contraversal Oppinions, then either for their Gifts and Graces, or their integrity and pru-

dence, & are often more affected with such kind of Subjects, then more useful seasonable and momentuous Doctrines, so that affection swayes them more then Judgement, as one sayes;

Most more partial zeal, affection blind, are rapt and rul'd, then a Judicious mind

3. Ministers should not be cast at for every personal fault, or escape in their conversation, there is no perfection here away, *He is lifeless that's faultless*, pray who of the Patriarchs, who of the prophets, or who of the holy Apostles of Christ without their blots and blamishes, and some of them had verie foul ones too? Yet GOD himself (who is Glorious in holiness) both employed them, and willed others to receave his will and ordinances from them, as from himself; Have a care ye be not righteous overmuch, or in seperating either in affection or fellowship from any of the Ministers or people of GOD, to whom a Holy GOD gives his presence. To which purpose sayes Mr. *Allan*, excommunicate not them from you, excommunicat not your selves from them, with whom CHRIST holds Communion; Judge not that CHRIST withdraws from all those who are not in every thing of your mind and way: destroy not all Communion, by seeking after a purer, than in this our imperfect state, we shall ever attain, *&c. Vind: Pietat: 2 Pt: p:* 142. And sayes Mr. *Rutherfoord*. The faults of the Guides are not your faults who are private Membets, you are to keep publick Communion in the publick ordinances of *CHRIST*, *&c.* peaceable *Plea: p:* 98. And let me suggest here, That whatever may be the faults of *Ministers* either real or supposed, yet people are not to set up a Chancery court in their own Bosomes, to canvals, censure and sentence Ministers and there faults, GOD is a GOD of order, and hath wisely appointed, Courts, Laws, Rulers or Officers, that in an orderly authoritative way, & according to the due Divine steps of procedure, they that give Just offence to the Church of GOD (whether they be Ministers or people) may be taken notice of and censured, suitable to the nature and degrees, of their known guilt, for if every body shall rashly and rudely usurp this part of the Ministerial Function, we should soon see *Anarchie* and confusion in the Church and that either there shall be no Ministers, or else every body turn *Ministers* at pleasure, and not only small faults severely and greatly censured, but faults made where there are none; yea and some for doing duty lashed as criminals; *Eccles:* 7. 20: *John* 16: 20: *Jam:* 5: 17: *Mat:* 17: 15, 16.

2. Ministers should not be cast at for their [illegible] silon between old Ministers and young, all [illegible] to be respected, honoured, and loved for their Works sake, when they behave soberly and conscientiously; tho I think venerable old Age deserves a grain of Allowance, because it is to be supposed that (*ceteribus Paribus*) they have most experience and understanding, but as Youth-hood is no Vice, so neither is old Age a Virtue. 1 *Tim.* 4. 12: *Tit.* 2. 15.

In the last place I come to some Cautions, 1. Have a care of dividing principles and practices, or packing parties in Israel, ye know the Matchiavellian *Maxime divide et impera*, first divide then rign. Renting makes way for running, and it is a sad Truth, that sometimes even the Saints of GOD, this way, are the Devils servants, for when once Satan gets the Church crumbled into parties, under specious and plausible pretences of respect to the Interests of Truth, he ordinarly employes those divided Factions to spend their Zeal and Witts against one another, upon which their unavoidably follows a renting of the Church with wages of *Hewen Timber*; And O! but it be sad to think upon, that as *Mr. Vines*, speaks of some Light and Inconstant People as he calls them who are still upon the Wing to practise separation, says he There are many make but a Humour of it, being ignorant of the greatness of the sin of renting asunder the Union and Unity of the body of Christ, *Vines* of the Lords Supper. C. 20, P. 261 And so grievous a sin this is, and has so many mischivous Consequences that it would take a Volumn to tell them in Number and Order, but that ye may have a brief passing View, it cannot be more compendiously performed, then in a few lines out of *Mr. Allein*; The Reproach of the Gospel, the harding of the perverse, the stumbling of the weak, the hindering of Edification, the promoting of Confusion, and every evil work, Pride and Haughtiness, Vanity and wantonness, envy and uncharitableness, &c: Are the sad effects of our divisions, *Vind pict*: 2. *pt*: *p*: 138. I will say no more of those whose genius leads them to renting and dividing, but only usurp a prayer that one makes.

GOD *save His Church from such unhallowed spirits,*
And quickly quench our woeful fellow heats. 1 *part.*

Here I take occasion to require that seriously to peruse Durham on Scandal, especially the 4th.

2. Have a care ye do not too credulously entertain ill reports of Ministers, sometimes the prophane are ready to do so, to excuse and extenuate their own Impieties, sometimes unwarry Professors are ready to do so, especially if the misrepresented Ministers be not of their way in every punctilio, *Psal.* 15. 3.

3. Have a care of Zeal without Knowledge, or being too Zealous for ye know not what, with not a few their wrath goes before their wits, and fumes of passion pass for flames of Zeal, and see your Zeal be not too great for smal things, as *Mr. Allan* says, *In matters Circumstantial, be not over hasty in stamping a jus divinum, in things disputable and doubtful; put no more weight nor a greater necessity on any thing than GOD hath evidently put on it, and spend no more of your Zeal about it than is proportionable to its weight and evidence: Vind: pict: 2: pt: 140.* I am not for disproving Godly Zeal, for surely there is none of the graces of more stead sometimes than purely spiritual Zeal, tempered with sound knowledg & wise Moderation, *Rom:* 10. 2. 3. *Gal.* 4. 18

4. Carefully guard against Spiritual pride and self conceit, be not proud of your gifts, graces, or any Christian attainments, for thus you make a bad use of the best things, and are foolish to the boot, in boasting of that which is not your own, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. And neither be proud of your sufferings for a profession of Religion, some have suffered for Religion, who have made Religion to suffer; some have followed for Religion, who would have died for their Religion as Martyrs. The LORD [illegible]